

REMARKS

In the office action dated January 13, 2010, the examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being rendered obvious by Wung et al. in view of Elkins and claims 12, 15, and 17-19 as being unpatentable over Wung and Elkins in view of Furia.

In light of the amendments above, claims 1, 3-5, and 7-16 have been cancelled, claims 2, 6, 17-19 been amended, and new claims 20-43 have been added.

Among other differences, the presently claimed embodiments differ from the cited art in that the claimed embodiments require one or more bone attachment devices configured to secure the attachment base to a bony portion of a body part involved in surgery. The Wung reference teaches attaching a needle guide to a probe clip, which can then be attached to a ultrasound imaging device. Nothing in the Wung reference teaches or suggests an attachment base with bone attachment openings for securing the attachment base to a body part. The Wung device would in fact be rendered inoperable if the probe clip 110, needle guide 100, probe lock clip 120, or any other portion of the needle guide system were attached to a body part involved in surgery as the operator would be unable to freely move the probe and needle guide together in the area of the intended biopsy.

Moreover, the claimed embodiments require a base having a first dovetail mating portion configured to mate with a second dovetail mating portion of a reference frame. The cited references do not teach or suggest such dovetail mating

portions on a base and corresponding reference frame. The dovetail mating portions provide improvements over the prior art by allowing the reference frame to be connected to a body part in a selectively re-attachable manner. The dovetail design also has further advantages such as allowing all surfaces of the first and second mating portions to be exposed, as would facilitate sterilization with an autoclave for example, and providing greater visibility in coupling or de-coupling the first and second mating portions during a surgical procedure.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and request notification to that effect. If any issues remain to be resolved, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at 404.815.6483.

Respectfully submitted,

/Leroy M. Toliver/

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP
1100 Peachtree Street, Suite 2800
Atlanta, Georgia, 30309-4530
Phone: 404-815-6483

Leroy M. Toliver
Reg. No. 50,409
Attorney for Assignee